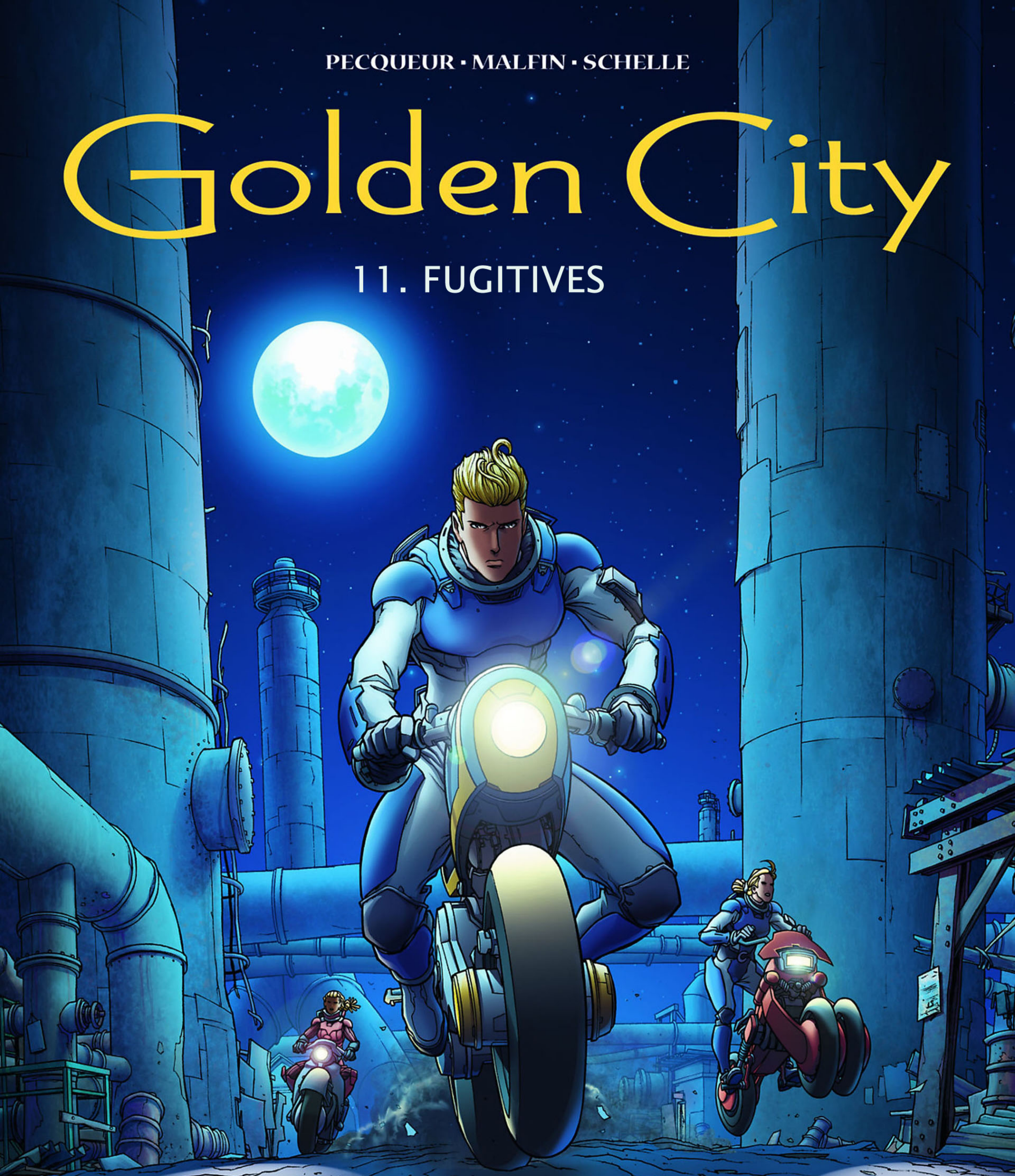
PECQUEUR • MALFIN • SCHELLE

Golden City

11. FUGITIVES



SERIE B

DELCOURT

Golden City

11. FUGITIVES

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HERE'S A SPECIAL NEWS BULLETIN! SINCE THE DEMONSTRATION AGAINST SOCIAL INEQUALITIES WHICH HAS RESULTED IN RIOTING ONE MONTH AGO, THINGS HAVE ONLY GOTTEN WORSE...

...THE REVOLT HAS SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE FROM CITY TO CITY AND EVENTUALLY ENGULFED THE ENTIRE WORLD. WE NOW GO LIVE TO OUR SPECIAL REPORTERS ON EARTH TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE OF THE SITUATION...

CHANNEL

...STARTING WITH FRANCE. WHAT'S HAPPENING IN PARIS, VIRGINIA?

PARIS FRANCE

WELL, DESPITE THE APPEALS FOR CALM FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, CLASHES BETWEEN THE RIOTERS AND THE CRS* HAVE NOT CEASED. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE VIOLENT.

BARRICADES HAVE BEEN RAISED EVERYWHERE, ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT BANK. THERE ARE SEVERAL HUNDRED CASUALTIES AND AS MANY INJURIES.

AND IT IS THE SAME IN OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING HERE, IN MOSCOW, WHERE THE RED SQUARE IS LIVING UP TO ITS NAME BECAUSE IT IS COVERED WITH CORPSES AND BLOOD.

THIS IS THE RESULT OF TERRIBLE FIGHTING BETWEEN THE PROTESTORS AND SECURITY FORCES THAT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR ONE WEEK. AS I SPEAK TO YOU NOW, FIGHTING IS STILL ONGOING IN SOME AREAS OF THE CITY.

* COMPAGNIES RÉPUBLICAINES DE SÉCURITÉ - RIOT CONTROL FORCES.

MANY VICTIMS ARE ALSO HERE, IN BEIJING, WHERE THE AUTHORITIES HAVE CALLED THE ARMY TO RESTORE ORDER. UNLIKE OTHER COUNTRIES, THIS IS NOT A QUESTION OF A SINGLE REVOLT, BUT A TRUE REVOLUTION.

ARMED FARMERS HAVE FLOCKED TO THE CHINESE CAPITAL FROM ALL PROVINCES TO OVERTHROW THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT.

PRESS

AND WHAT'S THE SITUATION ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC, WARREN? HAS THE CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE OF THESE PAST DAYS CALMED DOWN?

I'M AFRAID IT HAS NOT! THE REBEL MOVEMENT, WHICH BEGAN AT THE END OF LAST WEEK IN SOUTH AMERICA, HAS SPREAD ALL THE WAY TO THE UNITED STATES. IN NEW YORK, WHERE I AM RIGHT NOW, THE STOCK EXCHANGE ON WALL STREET AND THE HEADQUARTERS OF FAMOUS GOLDMAN SACHS BANK ARE IN FLAMES.

NEW YORK FIREFIGHTERS ARE UNABLE TO INTERVENE BECAUSE THE INSURGENTS HAVE BARRICADED THE ACCESS ROADS AND MANAGED TO REPEL THE ATTACKS OF THE POLICE THANKS TO AN IMPRESSIVE ARSENAL AT THEIR DISPOSAL. SOME OF THEM ARE EVEN ARMED WITH AIR-TO-GROUND MISSILES.

POLICE

THE REBELLION IS BREWING IN AFRICA AS WELL. AS YOU CAN SEE ON THESE IMAGES, THE NUMBER OF CLIMATE REFUGEES WHO ARE TRYING TO FLEE THEIR COUNTRIES, WHICH ARE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY A DROUGHT, IS GROWING LARGER AND LARGER. BUT THEY ARE FACING CROWD-CONTROL UNITS, WHICH PREVENT THEM FROM CLIMBING ON BOARD THE FOREIGN FREIGHTERS BECAUSE NO COUNTRY WANTS TO RECEIVE THEM.

THEN THERE IS THE CIVIL WAR THAT HAS RAVAGED A LARGE PART OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. ALL OVER THE AREA, PEOPLE ARE REVOLTING AGAINST THEIR LEADERS.

ALL OUR POLITICIANS ARE CORRUPTED. THEY'RE GETTING RICH OFF OUR BACKS! IN EXCHANGE FOR HUGE BRIBES, THEY ALLOW AMERICAN, EUROPEAN AND CHINESE INDUSTRIAL LOBBIES TO EXPLOIT THE RICHES OF OUR LAND. AND IN THE MEANTIME, OUR CHILDREN ARE DYING OF HUNGER.

2

AFTER THIS OVERVIEW, LET'S NOW RETURN TO GOLDEN CITY TO FOLLOW THE END OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY THE TWELVE ELDERS WHO LEAD OUR CITY. HOW ARE THE DEBATES COMING ALONG, CLARA?

RUSSIA

NEW YORK
USA

GOLDEN CITY

DIRECT LIVE

CHANNEL

NEWS

SIDNEY
AUSTRALIA

THEY ARE A LITTLE HEATED! AS YOU KNOW, THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS HAS BEEN VERY CRITICAL TOWARDS GOLDEN CITY LATELY. THIS IS THE REASON WHY OUR LEADERS HAVE DECIDED TO INVITE JOURNALISTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO RESPOND TO THEIR ACCUSATION IN PERSON.

PRESS
Zone 2

WHY ARE YOU ACCUSING US OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RISE OF VIOLENCE THAT IS CURRENTLY RAGING ON EARTH?

SIMPLE COINCIDENCE! WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT!

BECAUSE THE EARTH'S UPRISING ERUPTED ON THE DAY OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW GOLDEN CITY!

YET THE PROTESTORS CHANTED HOSTILE SLOGANS TOWARDS THE CITIZENS OF GOLDEN CITY, WHOM THEY CALLED FINANCIAL CROOKS AND WHITE COLLAR THUGS. THEY POINTED THEIR FINGER STRAIGHT AT YOU!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHERE THIS HATRED TOWARDS US COMES FROM! IS IT CRIME TO BE RICH?

NO. BUT IN THE CURRENT SOCIAL CONTEXT, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S INDECENT TO SPEND SO MUCH MONEY ON CONSTRUCTION OF A CITY RESERVED EXCLUSIVELY FOR BILLIONAIRES?

THERE ARE LUXURY HOTELS EVERYWHERE ON EARTH, IN WHICH COMMON MAN HAS INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL MEANS TO ENTER. ISN'T THIS THE SAME?

DURING A RECENT TELEVISION INTERVIEW, SISTER LEA HERSELF CONSIDERED IT SCANDALOUS THAT YOU CONTINUE TO LIVE IN COMFORT WHILE A LARGE PART OF THE PLANET LIVES BELOW THE POVERTY LINE.

SISTER LEA HAD BETTER REFRAIN FROM MAKING POLITICAL STATEMENTS, THIS IS NOT HER ROLE! AND WE DON'T NEED TO BE LECTURED BY ANYONE!

MANY PEOPLE ACCUSE YOU OF PRESENTING YOURSELF AS MASTERS OF THE WORLD!

THAT'S ABSURD! ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

3

ONE YEAR AGO, YOU BOUGHT THE MOON. COULD YOU TELL US WHY? THE WILDEST RUMORS CIRCULATE ABOUT THIS SUBJECT. WHAT EXACTLY IS THE REASON BEHIND THIS?

WE HAVE NOT BOUGHT IT, WE MERELY RENTED IT FROM AN INTERNATIONAL COMPANY FOR A PERIOD OF THIRTY YEARS. AND TO PUT AN END TO THE RUMORS YOU JUST MENTIONED, WE HAVE INVITED THE AMERICAN CNN CHANNEL TO DO A STORY ON OUR LUNAR ACTIVITIES.

THIS STORY WILL BE BROADCASTED THIS AFTERNOON. WATCH IT, YOU'LL SEE THAT WE HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE.

CERTAIN WORLD LEADERS BELIEVE THAT THE REVOLTS THAT CURRENTLY ENVELOPING THE PLANET MIGHT LEAD TO THIRD WORLD WAR. IS THAT ALSO YOUR OPINION?

IT IS, UNFORTUNATELY.

THIS CONCLUDES OUR PRESS CONFERENCE. I THANK YOU FOR COMING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. IF YOU WISH TO VISIT OUR CITY BEFORE RETURNING TO EARTH, OUR CHARMING HOSTESSES ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL.

IF A WORLD WAR BROKE OUT, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR POSITION? WILL YOU TAKE PART IN THE CONFLICT? AND IF SO, IN WHAT WAY?

THE DISCUSSIONS ARE CLOSED. THERE WILL BE NO MORE QUESTIONS.

YOU ARE THE VICE-CHAIRMAN OF BANKS GROUP, AREN'T YOU?

YES. WHY?

MY NAME IS JOHN CARTER. I'M A REPORTER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. HERE'S MY PRESS CARD. DO YOU HAVE A COUPLE OF MINUTES? I HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION I WISH TO TELL YOU.

WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

I'D RATHER DISCUSS THAT IN PRIVATE, AWAY FROM PRYING EARS, BECAUSE IT CONCERNS THE CHAIRMAN OF YOUR GROUP.

PRESS

4

SIT DOWN, MR. CARTER. WE ARE IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF BANKS GROUP. NO ONE CAN HEAR US. I'M LISTENING. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY THAT'S SO IMPORTANT?

BANKS IS ALIVE AND I KNOW WHERE HE IS.

ME TOO. HE IS CURRENTLY IN AFRICA. ARE YOU BOTHERING ME TO TELL ME THIS?

NO, HE'S NO LONGER IN AFRICA.

I SEE... WHERE IS HE?

ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.

I'LL REVEAL HIS LOCATION FOR ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.

EXCUSE ME?

THAT'S A LOT OF MONEY!

IT'S THE PRICE OF MY SILENCE. I WON'T SPEAK TO ANYONE ELSE. YOU WILL BE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS HIS LOCATI-ON. YOU HAVE MY WORD.

ARE YOU AT LEAST SURE THAT HE'S THE RIGHT GUY?

YES, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT! I RECOGNIZED HIM IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE I HAD INTERVIEWED HIM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES SIX YEARS AGO.

I CAN'T PAY YOU ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS WITHOUT FIRST TALKING TO OTHER SHAREHOLDERS OF BANKS GROUP. I'M GOING TO CALL A MEETING STRAIGHT AWAY AND ASK FOR THEIR OPINION. COME BACK HERE IN TWO HOURS AND I'LL GIVE YOU MY ANSWER.

IN THE MEANTIME, TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT GOLDEN CITY WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES.

CATCH! THIS ONE'S FOR YOU!

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE STILL IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING! AREN'T YOU TIRED OF WASTING TIME IN FRONT OF TV? WHAT CRAP ARE YOU WATCHING ANYWAY? AN AMERICAN SERIES?

NO. A DOCUMENTARY ON CNN.

CNN NEW
SPECIAL REPOR
DIRECT I
LIVE

LIVE

6

HELLO, MY NAME IS SEDNA WILLOW. I WORK FOR CNN.

WELCOME ON THE MOON! THE LEADERS OF GOLDEN CITY TOLD ME YOU WERE COMING.

COME, I'LL GIVE YOU A TOUR OF OUR FACILITIES.

THIS BASE RAISES MANY QUESTIONS AND SUSPICIONS AMONG THE MEDIA AND GLOBAL POPULATION. PEOPLE ARE ASKING IF CERTAIN STATES HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE FINANCING OF THIS LUNAR PROGRAM.

NO. AT THE MOMENT, THE NATIONS ARE TOO DEEP IN DEBT TO FINANCE SUCH A PROJECT. ONLY GOLDEN CITY HAS THE MEANS TO DO IT.

GO AHEAD, STEP INTO THE DECONTAMINATION AIRLOCK. IT'S MANDATORY BEFORE ENTERING THE BASE, DUE TO TOXICITY OF THE LUNAR DUST AND RADIOACTIVITY EMITTED BY THE GROUND.

YOU CAN REMOVE YOUR HELMETS. YOU NO LONGER NEED THEM, THE AIR CIRCULATING IN THESE BUILDINGS HAS THE SAME COMPOSITION AS THE AIR YOU BREATHE ON EARTH.

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO RECREATE TERRESTRIAL LIVING CONDITIONS HERE?

IT TOOK OUR SCIENTISTS SEVERAL YEARS AND A LOT OF MONEY TO REACH THE CURRENT RESULTS.

WE HAD TO SOLVE SEVERAL PROBLEMS: WEIGHTLESSNESS, AIR CONTAMINATION, MAINTENANCE OF ACCEPTABLE ATMOSPHERE, DRINKING WATER, THERMAL BALANCE IN LIVING AREAS, WASTE MANAGEMENT, ETC.

I IMAGINE THE COST OF THIS PROGRAM MUST BE STAGGERING. SO WHY INVEST THIS MUCH MONEY TO COME AND SETTLE ON THE MOON?

FOR SEVERAL REASONS. FIRST, BECAUSE THE MOON HAS BECOME A MAJOR ECONOMIC RESOURCE, MOSTLY DUE TO THE RICHNESS OF ITS SOIL, WHICH CONTAINS LARGE AMOUNTS OF HYDROGEN, OXYGEN, METAL OXIDES AND OTHER METALS.

ON THE ENERGY PLAN, THE MOON ALSO HAS MANY OTHER INTERESTING RESOURCES. HELIUM 3 IS VERY RARE ON EARTH, BUT ABUNDANT HERE. DEPOSITED BY SOLAR WINDS ON THE LUNAR SURFACE FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS, THIS ELEMENT, WHICH IS USED AS NUCLEAR FUEL, IS A CLEAN AND SAFE ENERGY SOURCE THAT CAN BE EXPORTED TO EARTH FOR SEVERAL CENTURIES. THE RESERVES ARE HUGE.

8

IS WORK ON THE MOON DANGEROUS?

YES. THE ABSENCE OF ATMOSPHERE, CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCES IN TEMPERATURE, STORMS AND DUST POSE VERY SERIOUS PROBLEMS THAT WE TOOK INTO ACCOUNT WHEN WE BUILT THIS BASE.

HOW MANY PEOPLE CURRENTLY RESIDE AND WORK HERE?

A THOUSAND. BUT THIS NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO GROW RAPIDLY BECAUSE WE INTEND TO RELOCATE SOME OF OUR TERRESTRIAL COMPANIES TO THE MOON.

EVEN YOUR WEAPONS FACTORIES?

NO. THE SPACE TREATY OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROHIBITS THE USE OF THE MOON FOR MILITARY PURPOSES.

BEFORE CONTINUING OUT VISIT, DEAR VIEWERS, WE HAD TO PUT ON THESE SANITIZED CLOTHES TO PREVENT ANY MICROBIAL PROPAGATION INSIDE THE LABORATORIES.

WHAT IS HAPPENING BEHIND THAT DOOR? WHY ARE HANDPICKED AND VERY EXPENSIVE SCIENTISTS WORKING TWENTY FOUR HOURS A DAY IN THESE LABS?

Laboratory

WHAT ARE THEY DOING? RESEARCHING, YES, BUT WHAT? LEGAL OR ILLEGAL?

TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, I INVITE YOU TO FOLLOW ME INSIDE THIS AREA THAT IS NORMALLY CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.

CNN Special report on the moon

Sedna Willaw - CNN International Correspondent

9

SECONDLY, WE CAN WORK ON THE MOON IN MICROGRAVITY IF WE WISH, THUS MAKING DISCOVERIES THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE ANYWHERE ELSE!

WHAT KIND OF DISCOVERIES?

WHY HAVE YOU INSTALLED THESE LABORATORIES ON THE MOON RATHER THAN ON EARTH?

FIRSTLY, TO AVOID THE RISKS OF ATTACKS OR WAR THAT WOULD RUIN THE ENORMOUS INVESTMENTS GRANTED TO THIS RESEARCH.

SCIENTIFIC, MEDICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL. RESEARCH IN VERY LOW GRAVITY LEADS TO MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS TO COUNTER, FOR EXAMPLE, THE MAIN CAUSES OF HUMAN MORTALITY.

WE ARE DEVELOPING NEW BIOMEDICAL TREATMENTS THAT WILL ALLOW HUMANS TO LIVE UP TO 150 YEARS. THEN WE HOPE OF REACHING 1000 YEARS, THEN IMMORTALITY.

THIS WILL POSE A SERIOUS OVERPOPULATION PROBLEM! EARTH WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE OR FEED SO MANY PEOPLE! IT WILL BE OVERCROWDED! SO WHERE WILL ALL THESE PEOPLE LIVE? ON SPACE STATIONS?

NO. AS YOU CAN SEE ON THIS SCREEN, WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON A PROGRAM TO PLACE HOLLOW PLANETS IN ORBIT, ON WHICH WE CAN MIGRATE FUTURE POPULATIONS.

SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES CLAIM THAT YOU ARE CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON THE HUMAN GENOME, WHICH IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.

THAT IS ENTIRELY UNTRUE. THERE'S NOTHING ILLEGAL GOING ON IN THIS BASE. PEOPLE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM OUR LUNAR ACTIVITIES. OUR RESEARCHERS WORK FOR HUMANITY, FOR ITS CURRENT AND FUTURE WELL-BEING.

THAT... THAT'S MIFA!

WHAT IS SHE DOING ON THE MOON?!

10

POLICE

BANKS IS ALIVE AND HE IS NO LONGER IN AFRICA!

ARE YOU SURE?!

I'M POSITIVE! I JUST HEARD IT FROM A JOURNALIST!

HOW COME BANKS WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE A HIRED KILLER?

I HAVE NO IDEA! I MADE SEVERAL PHONE CALLS TO THE KILLER IN QUESTION, BUT I CAN'T REACH HIM. HE'S NOT ANSWERING.

THE JOURNALIST I JUST TOLD YOU ABOUT HAS OFFERED TO REVEAL BANKS' LOCATION. BUT IN RETURN HE WANTS ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS. THIS IS WHY I'VE GATHERED YOU HERE. DO YOU AGREE THAT WE PAY HIM THIS AMOUNT?

CAN HE BE TRUSTED?

YES. HE WORKS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. HE SHOWED ME HIS PRESS CARD. HE ALSO INTERVIEWED BANKS A FEW YEARS AGO.

SO... WHAT IS YOUR DECISION?

BANKS ACTED LIKE A CRIMINAL WHEN HE STOLE A TRUCK FILLED WITH MINERAL WATER BOTTLES IN AFRICA! HE'S NO LONGER WORTHY TO CHAIR OUR GROUP! WE HAVE TO GET THIS OVER WITH ONCE AND FOR ALL!

I ENTIRELY AGREE WITH YOU!

ME TOO!

AND ME! LET'S PAY ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS TO THIS REPORTER. THAT WAY WE'LL KNOW WHERE TO FIND BANKS AND WE CAN SEND ANOTHER HIRED KILLER AFTER HIM IMMEDIATELY!

YES? ALL RIGHT, I'LL GO GET HIM.

11

* LIRE TOME 10.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN IS WAITING FOR YOU IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, MR. CARTER. WOULD YOU PLEASE FOLLOW ME?

COME IN, MR. CARTER! COME AND SIT DOWN!

WE HAVE AGREED TO PAY THE AMOUNT OF MONEY YOU MENTIONED. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE US TO CARRY OUT THIS PAYMENT? CASH OR CHECK?

CHECK.

MISS! PLEASE GO GET A CHECKBOOK FROM THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT AND BRING IT TO ME.

VERY WELL, MR. VICE-CHAIRMAN.

NOT LET'S HEAR IT! TELL US WHERE BANKS IS HIDING!

RIGHT HERE!

B...BANKS?!

SURPRISED TO SEE ME ALIVE, AREN'T YOU? THE KILLER THAT YOU HIRED TO KILL ME LIES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN! BUT BEFORE HE DIED, HE HAD THE TIME TO TELL ME THAT HE WAS PAID TO ELIMINATE ME BY A RESIDENT OF GOLDEN CITY.

HE DIDN'T KNOW THE NAME OF THIS CITIZEN, BUT I FIGURED HE MUST BE ONE OF YOU! OR MAYBE EVEN ALL OF YOU! WHO ELSE WOULD PROFIT FROM MY DEATH?

YOU ARE MISTAKEN, MY DEAR HARRISON! HOW CAN YOU, EVEN FOR A SINGLE MOMENT, THINK THAT WE HAVE MADE AN ATTEMPT ON YOUR LIFE? WE ARE NOT MURDERERS!

YOU ACCUSE US WITHOUT PROOF! IT'S A DISGRACE!

I HAVE PROOF!

HERE IT IS! I CONCEALED THIS MICRO TRANSMITTER UNDER THE TABLE WHEN I MET WITH THE VICE-CHAIRMAN EARLIER TODAY. AND I WAS able TO HEAR YOUR CONVERSATION WITH A MINI RECEIVER INSTALLED IN THESE GLASSES.

I'M NOT SURPRISED THAT YOU TRIED TO REMOVE ME! YOU ARE FINANCIAL SHARKS, READY TO DO ANYTHING TO TAKE CONTROL OF BANKS GROUP!

BUT YOUR KILLER MURDERED WINTA, THE WOMAN I LOVED. SHE'S DEAD BECAUSE OF YOU, BY YOUR FAULT. THAT'S WHY I CAME BACK TO GOLDEN CITY. TO MAKE YOU PAY FOR THIS MURDER.

13

I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE DEATH OF THIS WOMAN, HARRISON, YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME! I'M NOT THE ONE WHO GOT THE IDEA TO CALL A HITMAN!

ME NEITHER!

NOR ME!

THEN WHO?

HIM!

YOU BUNCH OF HYPOCRITES! YOU ALL AGREED!

WRONG! ONLY YOU KNEW THE KILLER!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CALLED HIM! NOT US!

YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS! AND ONLY YOU!

I'M SORRY, OLD CHAP, BUT YOU MUST FACE THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS!

YOU BASTARDS! YOU'RE MISTAKEN IF YOU THINK THAT YOU'LL GET AWAY THIS EASILY! I HAVE FILES ON ALL OF YOU! I'LL REVEAL ALL YOUR SHENANIGANS TO THE PUBLIC!

STAND UP! YOU'RE GOING TO FOLLOW ME TO THE POLICE STATION! I'LL FILE A COMPLAINT AGAINST YOU FOR PREMEDITATED CRIME. AND I'M SURE THAT ALL SHAREHOLDERS PRESENT HERE WILL BE PLEASED TO TESTIFY AGAINST YOU.

NATURALLY! YOU CAN COUNT ON US, MY DEAR HARRISON!

EXCUSE ME FOR DISTURBING YOU, BUT I BROUGHT THE CHECKBOOK...?!

THAT ANIMAL! WE ALL WITNESSED HOW HE PUNCHED YOU IN THE FACE, HARRISON! THIS WILL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE FOR HIM!

NOTHING BROKEN, I HOPE?

WHERE DID HE GO?

DOWN THE STAIRS, THAT WAY.

THE BRAIN DAY

STOP
EMERGENCY EXIT ONLY

15

GC-0734

GC-1088 D

SPACE AGENCY

GATE 23
VIP ACCESS

GATE 24

GATE 23

RENT ME!

SECURITY LINE DO NOT CROSS

PLEASE STEP DOWN IMMEDIATELY, SIR! IT'S FORBIDDEN TO USE THESE RENTAL SHUTTLES WITHOUT HAVING FIRST PAID THE DEPOSIT!

I DON'T HAVE TIME, I'M IN A HURRY! I'LL PAY YOU LATER!

"LATER, LATER", THAT GUY'S GOT A LOT OF NERVE!

16

THAT BASTARD BANKS THINKS THAT HE'S GOT ME BY THE BALLS, BUT HIS HANDS AREN'T BIG ENOUGH! I'M NOT GOING TO SLEEP IN JAIL TOMORROW!

IF HE CONTINUES TO PISS ME OFF, I'LL EXPOSE A VERY COMPROMISING FILE I HOLD ON HIS DEAR MOTHER!

?!

GCC-0018

NOOOOO!

THAT'S FOR WINTA, YOU BASTARD!

HELLO, HARRISON? IT'S KUMIKO! APPLE, SOLO AND I WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU TO TALK ABOUT MIFA! IT'S VERY IMPORTANT! CAN YOU COME?

YES. I'LL COME TONIGHT.

18

ARE YOU SURE IT WAS MIFA?

YEAH. WE GOT A CLOSE-UP VIEW OF HER IN THAT CNN REPORT. WE RECOGNIZED HER IMMEDIATELY.

I WONDER WHAT SHE'S DOING ON THE MOON!

THE ONLY WAY TO FIND OUT IS TO GO THERE!

YES, BUT HOW?

TO CUT THE COLOSSAL COST OF THE LUNAR BASE, THE LEADERS OF GOLDEN CITY OFFER WEEKEND STAYS ON THE MOON, IN COLLABORATION WITH NASA.

IT MUST COST A FORTUNE!

THREE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS PER PERSON. IN PRINCIPLE, IT'S RESERVED EXCLUSIVELY FOR CITIZENS OF GOLDEN CITY. BUT I'M SURE THEY'LL ALLOW ME TO TAKE SOMEONE WITH ME.

ME! ME! I WANNA GO WITH YOU!

NO. SINCE MIFA NO LONGER REMEMBERS ANYTHING ABOUT YOU THREE OR HER PAST, SHE MOST CERTAINLY WON'T AGREE TO COME BACK HERE. SO I'LL HAVE TO SMUGGLE HER BACK TO EARTH AGAINST HER WILL. AND FOR THAT, I NEED SOMEONE WHO'S USED TO THESE KIND OF MISSIONS: AMBER.

I'LL OFFER HER A LARGE SUM OF MONEY TO COME ALONG. IF SHE AGREES, I'LL BUY TWO SEATS FROM THE AMERICAN SPACE AGENCY...

...BOARD THE SHIP AT CAP KENNEDY...

...AND LAND ON THE MOON TWENTY HOURS LATER.

IN THESE CLOSETS YOU WILL FIND SANITIZED OUTFITS THAT YOU MUST PUT ON AND WEAR THROUGHOUT YOUR WEEKEND WITH US, ALONG WITH THESE SPECIAL SHOES. IT'S MANDATORY IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY MICROBIAL PROPAGATION INSIDE THE BASE.

19

I'LL WAIT FOR YOU IN THE HALLWAY WHILE YOU CHANGE.

Laboratory

HERE, THIS SHOULD FIT YOU.

THANKS! DO YOU HAVE A PLAN TO EXTRACT MIFA?

NO. BUT IT WON'T BE EASY, BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE ANY WEAPONS.

WE SHOULD'VE STASHED THEM IN OUR BAGS.

NASA SECURITY SERVICES WOULD HAVE DISCOVERED THEM. THEY SYSTEMATICALLY SEARCH ALL BAGGAGE BEFORE EACH LAUNCH TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF ATTACK.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAW MIFA?

FIVE YEARS AGO.

SHE MUST'VE CHANGED SINCE THEN. ARE YOU SURE YOU'LL RECOGNIZE HER?

YES. APPLE AND SOLO SHOWED ME A RECENT PICTURE OF HER.

TO HAVE THE GOLDEN CITY LEADERS ACCEPT THE IDEA OF YOU COMING WITH ME, I MADE THEM BELIEVE THAT YOU WERE A VERY OLD FRIEND. SO IT'S BETTER TO STAY ON FIRST-NAME BASIS. IT'LL SEEM MORE BELIEVABLE.

OK.

FOLLOW ME. NOW I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A TOUR OF OUR FACILITIES.

NO ADMITTANCE

MIFA!

NO ADMITTANCE

RESTRICTED AREA

WHAT'S BEHIND THAT DOOR? CAN WE GO TAKE A LOOK?

NO, IT'S NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. IT CAN BE ACCESSED ONLY BY BASE PERSONNEL. YOU ALSO NEED A MAGNETIC CARD GO GET IN.

DO YOU HAVE ONE?

OF COURSE.

?

21

WITH THIS, WE CAN OPEN THAT DOOR!

NO ADMITTANCE

CHNICAL ROOM

Zone 1

Danger HYDROG

Zone 17-03

22

WHAT'S THIS MACHINE?

WHO ARE YOU?! HOW DID YOU GET IN? IT'S NOT ALLOWED TO COME IN THIS LABORATORY WITHOUT PERMISSION!

B... BANKS!

?!

YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER?

OH YES! FOR QUITE A WHILE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, PROFESSOR SEED?

AND YOU?

I CAME TO GET MIFA.

MIFA? NEVER HEARD OF HER! WHAT ABOUT YOU, DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE NAMED MIFA?

NO, NO ONE.

OF COURSE SHE DOESN'T REMEMBER HER NAME, PROFESSOR SEED, YOU ERASED HER MEMORY! APPLE AND SOLO EXPLAINED HOW YOU OPERATE. I PROMISED THEM TO BRING MIFA BACK ON EARTH. AND THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO DO!

NO WAY! IF YOU TRY TO GET CLOSE TO HER, I'LL SHOOT! HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!

CALL THE SECURITY! TELL THEM TO GET HERE RIGHT NOW!

WHAT'S THE NUMBER?

2630.

ARH!

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF. WE DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU. WE'RE HERE TO PROTECT YOU.

DON'T BELIEVE THEM, THEY'RE LYING! SOUND THE ALARM! NOW!

SAFETY

IS THIS HOW YOU PROTECT HER? BY KNOCKING HER OUT?

SHUT UP! AND DO EXACTLY WHAT WE TELL YOU, OR I'LL GET ANGRY! OKAY?

I KNOW YOU ERASED MIFA'S MIND THANKS TO ONE OF YOUR INVENTIONS, PROFESSOR. YOU ERASED ALL HER MEMORIES AND STORED THEM IN THE LAPTOP'S MEMORY.

WHERE'S THIS LAPTOP AND THE SOFTWARE? HERE?

NO, I DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME TO TAKE IT WITH ME WHEN I RAN AWAY FROM THE CLINIC WHERE I WORKED BACK THEN.

LET'S HOPE THEY'RE STILL THERE! IF THEY ARE, WE'LL NEED YOU TO REPROGRAM MIFA'S MEMORY, BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO USE THE SOFTWARE. SO YOU'RE COMING WITH US! FOLLOW US WITHOUT ANY COMPLAINTS AND EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE!

WHAT IS THIS MACHINE? ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR INVENTIONS?

NO, IT'S A REVOLUTIONARY 3D PRINTER DESIGNED BY ENGINEERS OF THIS LUNAR BASE. IT CAN CREATE CLONES OF HUMAN BEINGS FROM FROZEN STEM CELLS.

WHICH IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN ON EARTH! IT'S PROBABLY ONE OF THE REASONS WHY THE LEADERS OF GOLDEN CITY HAVE DECIDED TO CREATE THIS BASE. HERE THEY CAN MAKE CLONES FREELY AND WITH IMPUNITY!

I SUPPOSE YOU DIDN'T CREATE THESE CLONES BY ACCIDENT. WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

I DON'T KNOW, NOBODY TOLD ME. THEY ORDERED ME TO MAKE THEM. SO I DID.

YOU REALLY THINK THAT WE'LL SWALLOW SUCH A LIE? WHAT ARE THESE CLONES FOR? ANSWER US!

FUTURE SOLDIERS PRODUCED TO INVADE EARTH IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A SINGLE AND TOTALITARIAN WORLD POWER UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF GOLDEN CITY. I... I IMPLANTED ELECTRONIC CHIPS UNDER THEIR SKIN, WHICH I PROGRAMMED SPECIALLY TO MAKE THEM POWERFUL, COMBATIVE AND OBEDIENT.

SECURITY! YES? WHAT?! IS THIS A JOKE?

NOT AT ALL! IT'S THE TRUTH! BANKS AND HIS FRIEND KNOCKED ME OUT AND LOCKED ME IN A CLOSET FROM WHICH I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO GET OUT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE UP TO, BUT I THOUGHT I SHOULD WARN YOU BECAUSE I'M PRETTY SURE THAT THEY DIDN'T GET RID OF ME BY ACCIDENT. THEY MUST BE PLANNING SOMETHING.

OK! I'LL SOUND THE ALARM RIGHT NOW!

MIFA... MIFA, CAN YOU HEAR ME? MIFA!

WHAT... WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

IT'S TIME TO TELL HER THE TRUTH, PROFESSOR SEED!

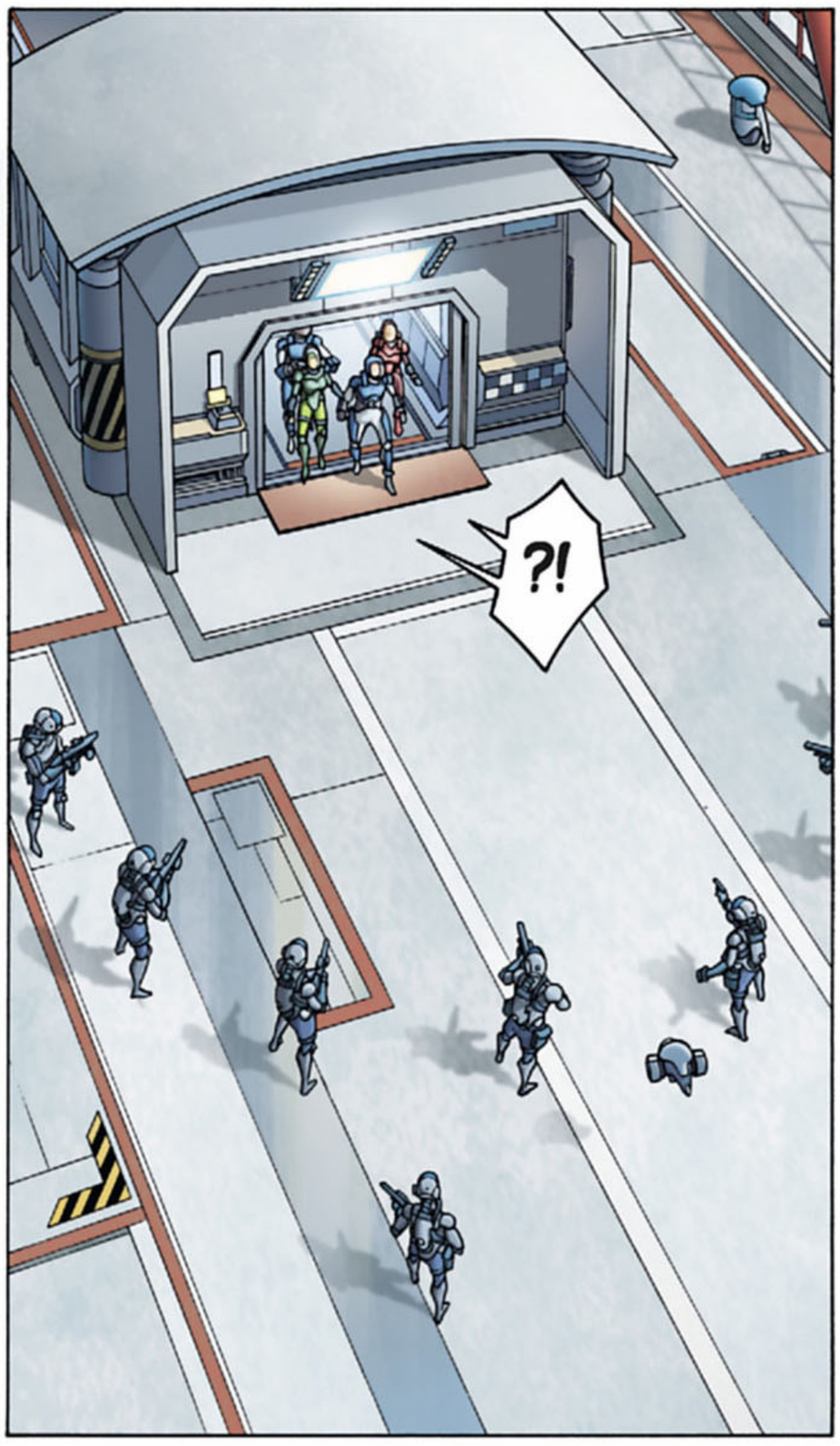
WHAT TRUTH?

TELL HER! AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT, WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!

YOUR NAME IS ACTUALLY MIFA. YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING BECAUSE I ERASED YOUR MEMORY. YOU FORGOT ALL ABOUT YOUR PAST.

I'VE KNOWN YOU A LONG TIME. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID OF ME, I'M YOUR FRIEND. PUT ON THIS SPACE SUIT, I'LL TAKE YOU BACK TO EARTH WHERE YOU'LL FIND YOUR BROTHERS AND YOUR LITTLE SISTER.

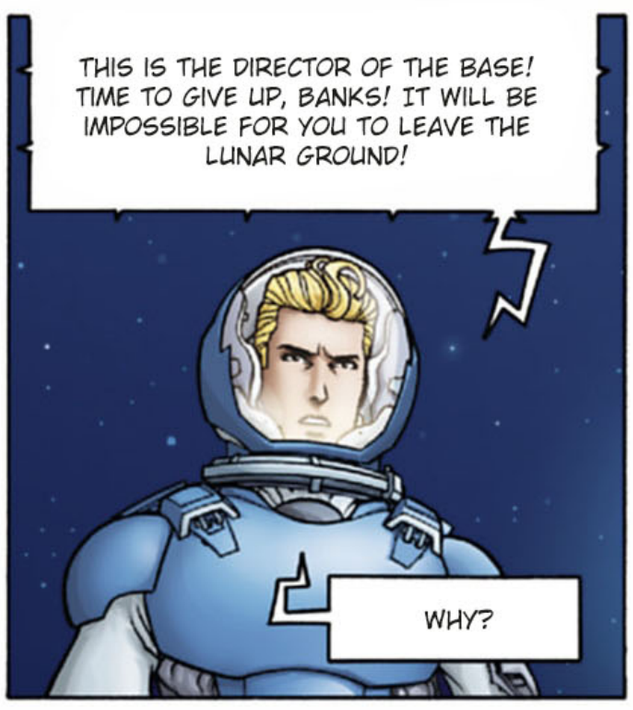
CODE : Confirmed
CAUTION
To the Space

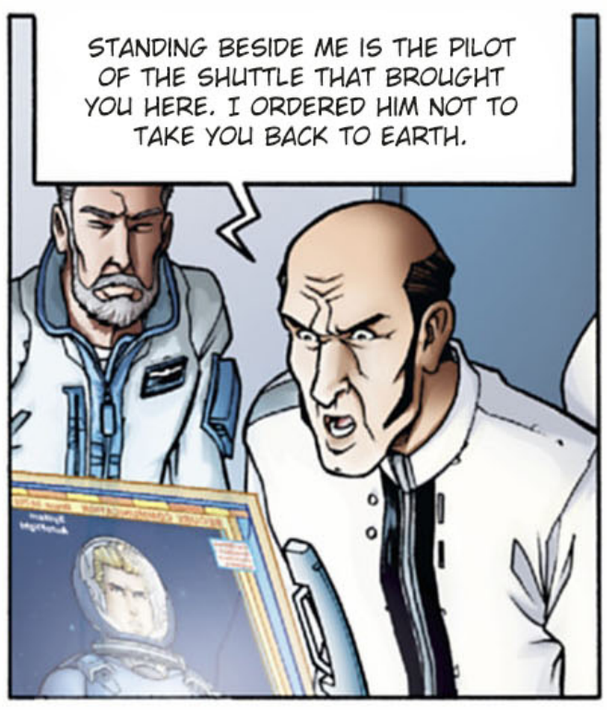

?!

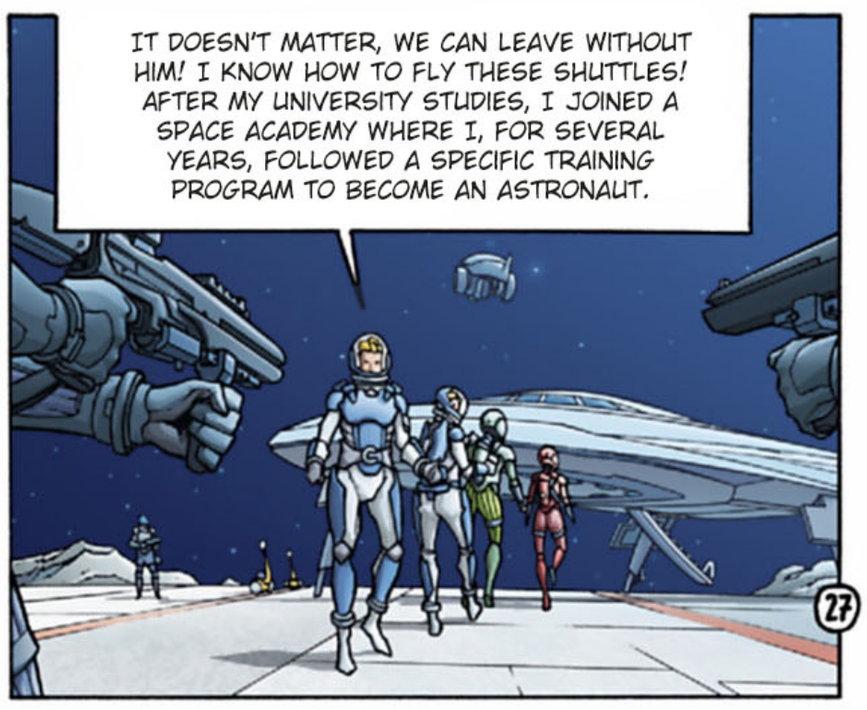
WE FOUND THEM! BUT THEY'RE THREATENING TO KILL PROFESSOR SEED IF WE STOP THEM FROM BOARDING THE SPACE SHUTTLE! SHOULD WE OPEN FIRE ANYWAY?

ABSOLUTELY NOT! IF BANKS GETS KILLED IN THE GUNFIGHT, IT WILL MAKE THE HEADLINES OF ALL NEWSPAPERS! WE ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS WITH THE PRESS AS IT IS, THERE'S NO NEED TO MAKE THINGS WORSE! BLOODSHED MUST BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS!
UNDERSTOOD, MR. DIRECTOR.

I'D LIKE TO TALK TO BANKS! IS THAT POSSIBLE?
OF COURSE! I'LL SET UP A RADIO LINK THROUGH HIS HELMET!


THIS IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE BASE! TIME TO GIVE UP, BANKS! IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO LEAVE THE LUNAR GROUND!
WHY?


STANDING BESIDE ME IS THE PILOT OF THE SHUTTLE THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE. I ORDERED HIM NOT TO TAKE YOU BACK TO EARTH.


IT DOESN'T MATTER, WE CAN LEAVE WITHOUT HIM! I KNOW HOW TO FLY THESE SHUTTLES! AFTER MY UNIVERSITY STUDIES, I JOINED A SPACE ACADEMY WHERE I, FOR SEVERAL YEARS, FOLLOWED A SPECIFIC TRAINING PROGRAM TO BECOME AN ASTRONAUT.
27

I ALWAYS WANTED TO EXPLORE SPACE. AFTER THE DEATH OF MY MOTHER, I HAD TO ABANDON IT TO TAKE OVER AS HEAD OF BANKS GROUP.

IT'S OVER, WE CAN'T STOP THEM FROM TAKING OFF! UNLESS WE USE THE HARD WAY AND SHOOT THEM DOWN, BUT I REFUSE FOR THE REASONS I'VE MENTIONED EARLIER. CALL THE MAYOR OF GOLDEN CITY RIGHT NOW!

I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, MR. MAYOR. THE DIRECTOR OF OUR LUNAR BASE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU. I TOLD HIM THAT YOU ARE CURRENTLY HAVING A MEETING WITH THE TWELVE ELDERS, BUT HE INSISTS. HE SAYS THAT IT'S VERY IMPORTANT.

PUT HIM THROUGH.

HELLO? YES, I'M LISTENING! WHAT'S GOING ON? **WHAT?!**

WE HAVE A BIG PROBLEM: BANKS HAS MANAGED TO GET INSIDE SEED'S LABORATORY. HE KIDNAPPED HER BEFORE FLEEING ABOARD THE SPACE SHUTTLE THAT BROUGHT HIM ON THE MOON. THE DIRECTOR OF THE BASE WANTS TO KNOW WHAT HE SHOULD DO: ALERT NASA OR THE POLICE?

NEITHER! IF BANKS FALLS INTO THEIR HANDS, HE WILL REVEAL THAT WE HIRED SEED, A CRIMINAL WANTED BY INTERPOL! HE'LL ALSO TELL THEM THAT SHE MANUFACTURED HUMAN CLONES FOR US. WHICH IS ILLEGAL!

YOU'RE RIGHT: IF BANKS TALKS, WE COULD HAVE SOME SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH THE LAW! SO IT'S BETTER TO KEEP QUIET ABOUT THIS UNFORTUNATE AFFAIR AND HANDLE IT ON OUR OWN.

I ENTIRELY AGREE WITH YOU! BANKS NOW KNOWS TOO MUCH ABOUT OUR LUNAR ACTIVITIES. THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP HIM QUIET IS TO SILENCE HIM. BUT WE'LL HAVE TO BE DISCREET.

♪

HELLO? HEY, HARRISON! DID YOU MANAGE TO FIND MIFA?

YES! BUT NOW WE HAVE TO GET HER MEMORY BACK. AND FOR THIS, WE'LL NEED THE LAPTOP AND SOFTWARE THAT SEED USED IN THE CLINIC WHERE SHE WORKED. CAN YOU GO FIND THEM?

YEAH, NO PROBLEM, I'LL GO WITH KUMIKO AND SOLO! WE KNOW WHERE TO FIND THE CLINIC! WHAT? ALL RIGHT, I GET IT!

AND? WHAT DID HE SAY? IS HE BRINGING MIFA?

YES! BUT SINCE HE STOLE A SPACE SHUTTLE, HE WON'T LAND AT CAP KENNEDY. HE DOESN'T WANT TO GET ARRESTED BY THE POLICE. HE'LL TRY TO LAND IN AN ABANDONED LANDING AREA.

Command-
System OK

HE'S CRAZY TO LAND IN THAT AREA! IT'S FULL OF SUPER VIOLENT JUNKIES! IT SO DANGEROUS EVEN THE COPS STAY AWAY FROM THAT PLACE!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY BANKS HAS DECIDED TO LAND THERE: THERE'S NO RISK OF BEING CAUGHT BY THE COPS! FROM WHAT HE TOLD ME, HE DEPARTED FROM THE MOON FIFTEEN HOURS AGO. SO HE'LL ARRIVE ON EARTH IN ABOUT FIVE HOURS. THIS GIVES US AMPLE TIME TO GO TO THE CLINIC AND LOOK FOR THE COMPUTER AND SOFTWARE.

IT TAKES ONLY TWENTY HOURS TO GO FROM EARTH TO THE MOON? THAT'S NOT MUCH!

IT'S THANKS TO THE NUCLEAR PROPULSIONS. EVER SINCE NASA STARTED USING IT FOR THEIR ROCKETS, IT SAVED US A LOT OF TIME. IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, THE APOLLO MISSIONS TOOK FIVE DAYS TO COMPLETE THE SAME TRIP!

29

I WAS ORDERED BY THE TWELVE ELDERS TO USE OUR CLONES TO ELIMINATE BANKS. HOW MANY UNITS DO WE HAVE AVAILABLE?

FIVE! SEED PROGRAMMED THEM YESTERDAY. THEY ARE READY FOR ACTION.

WHERE ARE THEY?

TRAINING AT THE FIRING RANGE.

RESTRICTED AREA

HOLD YOUR FIRE!

YOU WILL BE SENT ON EARTH TO PERFORM YOUR FIRST MISSION. YOU JOB IS TO FIND AND ELIMINATE A MAN NAMED HARRISON BANKS. WE WILL UPLOAD HIS PICTURE ON YOUR CELL PHONES SO THAT YOU CAN RECOGNIZE HIM.

HE HAS KIDNAPPED SEED. BRING HER BACK SAFE AND SOUND. WE ABSOLUTELY NEED HER TO CONTINUE THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH SHE HAS STARTED.

ANY QUESTIONS? NO? PERFECT! IMMEDIATELY PROCEED TO OUR UNDERGROUND LAUNCH PAD! A SPACE SHUTTLE IS WAITING FOR YOU, READY TO TAKE OFF!

CONTROL ROOM

WHAT DO I DO? SHOOT IN THE CROWD?

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT. THEY'RE ARMED AND THEY'LL WILL FIRE BACK IMMEDIATELY. MIFA AND SEED MIGHT GET KILLED IN THE SHOOTOUT. PUT YOUR GUN IN YOUR POCKET, FOR NOW.

IT'S DANGEROUS TO WALK AROUND THIS SECTOR... ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT! I HEAR IT'S FULL OF CRAZY THUGS AND RAPISTS! WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU COME HERE FOR?!

I WAS FORCED TO MAKE AN EMERGENCY LANDING. ENGINE PROBLEM.

AND WE HAVE A MONEY PROBLEM! RIGHT, GUYS?

YEAH! WE'RE IN SERIOUS NEED OF CASH, 'CAUSE WE RAN OUT OF DRUGS AND WE NEED THEM REAL BAD!

SO PASS THE MONEY! STARTING WITH YOU! YOU HEAR ME, HALF-BREED?

THIS HALF-BREED'S TELLING YOU TO FUCK OFF!

31

FORK OVER THE DOUGH OR I'LL BLOW YOUR FACE OFF!

ARH!

ARE YOU OKAY? YOU AREN'T HURT, ARE YOU?

NO, BUT SEED GOT HIT PRETTY BAD.

SHE'S DEAD.

SHIT! THIS TOTALLY RUINS ALL YOUR HOPES! WITHOUT HER, YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO RECOVER HER MEMORIES! WE'RE SCREWED!

MAYBE NOT. BEFORE SHE DIED, SHE HAD TIME TO TELL ME SOMETHING.

32

WHAT?

SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE SHOWED HOW TO USE THE SOFTWARE TO ONE OF THE ASSISTANTS WHO USED TO WORK WITH HER AT THE CLINIC.

DID SHE TELL YOU WHERE THIS ASSISTANT LIVES?

NO, SHE ONLY TOLD ME HER NAME: JANE MOORE.

WE'LL CHECK THE INTERNET LATER AND SEE IF WE CAN FIND HER ADDRESS. IN THE MEANTIME, IT'S BEST NOT TO LINGER IN THIS BAD NEIGHBORHOOD. WE'LL EACH GRAB A BIKE AND JOIN APPLE, SOLO AND KUMIKO.

WE SHOULD MAKE A STOP AT MY PLACE BEFORE THE SUN COMES UP, OTHERWISE WE MIGHT GET SPOTTED BY THE COPS WITH OUR SPACE SUITS!

OK!

MIFA CAN PUT ON ONE OF MY DRESSES AND YOU CAN TAKE ONE OF MY SON'S JEANS. HE HAS GROWN A LOT LATELY. HE'S THE SAME HEIGHT AS YOU.

HAVE YOU RECOVERED SEED'S LAPTOP AND SOFTWARE?

YES, HARRISON! WE'RE REALLY LUCKY THAT NOBODY STOLE IT! THE CLINIC IS ABANDONED. ANYONE CAN GET IN.

SO YOU DON'T REMEMBER US?

NO. YOU'RE JUST STRANGERS TO ME. I DON'T REMEMBER MY PAST. I FORGOT EVERYTHING. THAT'S WHY WE ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO FIND JANE MOORE.

THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY! THERE ARE TEN WOMEN WITH THAT NAME IN THE PHONE BOOK!

FINE, AMBER AND I WILL HAVE TO HEAD OVER TO THESE TEN ADDRESSES! APPLE, YOU'LL COME WITH US. YOU'VE SEEN HER BEFORE, SO YOU'LL BE able TO RECOGNIZE HER. YOUR TOUCH PAD HAS A BUILT-IN GPS?

YES!

PERFECT! YOU'LL GUIDE US THROUGH THE CITY.

33

AND?

STILL NOTHING. THE WOMAN WHO LIVES HERE IS NOT THE ONE WE'RE LOOKING FOR.

NO, IT'S NOT HER, I'M POSITIVE. SEED'S ASSISTANT WAS YOUNGER.

WE'VE ALREADY CHECKED EIGHT ADDRESSES. THERE'S ONLY TWO MORE TO GO.

WHERE DO WE GO NEXT?

IT'S CLOSE. TURN RIGHT AT THE NEXT CORNER.

THE BRAIN DAY

SALE UP TO 75% OFF

SALE

STOP!
OVER THERE!

YOU WANT ME TO GO WITH YOU?

NO, I WANT YOU TO STAY HERE AND KEEP AN EYE ON THE BIKES.

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE? I LIVE IN THIS BUILDING, MAYBE I CAN HELP YOU.

JANE MOORE, WHAT FLOOR IS SHE ON?

ON THE GROUND FLOOR. BUT SHE'S NOT HERE. SHE'S ON VACATION.

WHERE?

34

WELL, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. YOU CAN ASK HER ROOMMATE. SHE CAN PROBABLY TELL YOU MORE.

DRRRIIING!

DRRRIIING!

I'M COMING, I'M COMING! DON'T BOTHER RINGING THIRTY SIX TIMES!

HELLO! IS THIS WHERE JANE MOORE LIVES?

SHE'S NOT HERE... SHE TOOK OFF...

WHERE?

TO THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN... IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THAT BASTARD SEED... SHE'S THE ONE WHO TOLD HER ABOUT GOLD...

WHAT GOLD?!

IT APPEARS THAT GOLD BARS STORED IN THE CENTRAL BANK OF GOLDEN CITY REMAINED IN THE WRECK... NO ONE HAS GONE BACK TO RECOVER THEM. SO JANE CAME UP WITH AN IDEA TO GO LOOK FOR IT.... WITH SOME OF HER FRIENDS... I REFUSED TO GO WITH HER... THAT'S WHY SHE GAVE ME THIS BLACK EYE... WE REALLY LOVED EACH OTHER... WE SCREWED ALL THE TIME... I NEVER THOUGHT SHE WOULD DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO ME...

IS THIS HER?

YES, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, I RECOGNIZE HER. THAT'S PROFESSOR SEED'S ASSISTANT.

35

MMM...?

GODDAMMIT, I CAN'T EVEN SLEEP IN PEACE... ALWAYS BOTHERED BY SOME ASSHOLE... GIVE ME MY PHONE...

HELLO? OH, IT'S YOU! WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME SO EARLY IN THE MORNING?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, EARLY? IT'S HALF PAST NOON! YOU STAYED UP ALL NIGHT AGAIN, DIDN'T YOU? DRINKING ALL NIGHT LONG, LIKE USUAL! EXCEPT FOR THE OBVIOUS, WHAT ARE YOU DOING RIGHT NOW? NOTHING? OKAY, SO LISTEN: CAN YOU SUPPLY ME WITH THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT FOR DEEP WATER DIVER? INCLUDING A SUBMARINE?

SURE, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP YOU OUT WITH THAT. I HAVE A BUDDY WHO RENTS THIS KIND OF GEAR. BUT IT'S VERY EXPENSIVE. WHO'S GOING TO PAY?

BANKS. WE'LL DIVE TO THE WRECK OF GOLDEN CITY.

OH YEAH? WHY?

TO FIND ONE JANE MOORE. I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING LATER. WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DELIVER THE EQUIPMENT? TOMORROW? OK, YOU GOT IT!

36

WHY CAN'T I DIVE WITH YOU?

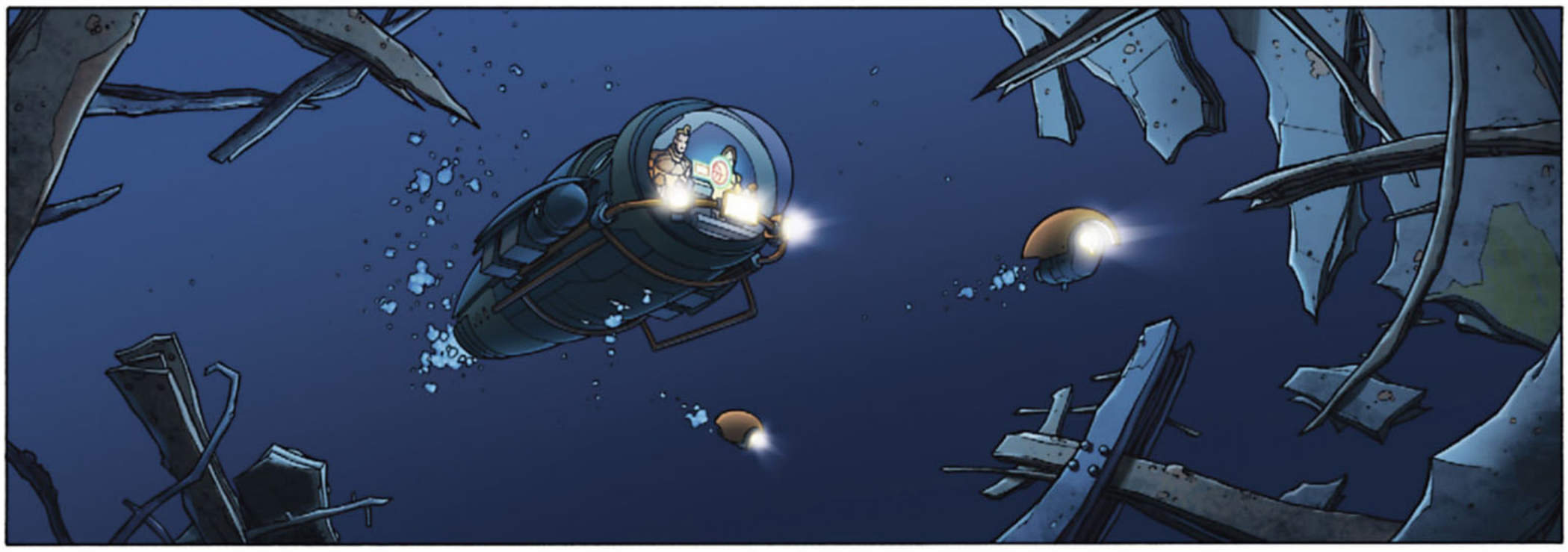
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS. THE WRECK LIES AT THREE THOUSAND METERS BELOW THE SURFACE, AT THE EDGE OF AN ABYSS INTO WHICH IT MAY SLIP AT ANY MOMENT. AND YOU WON'T BE ALONE. APPLE AND SOLO WILL STAY HERE TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE BOAT.

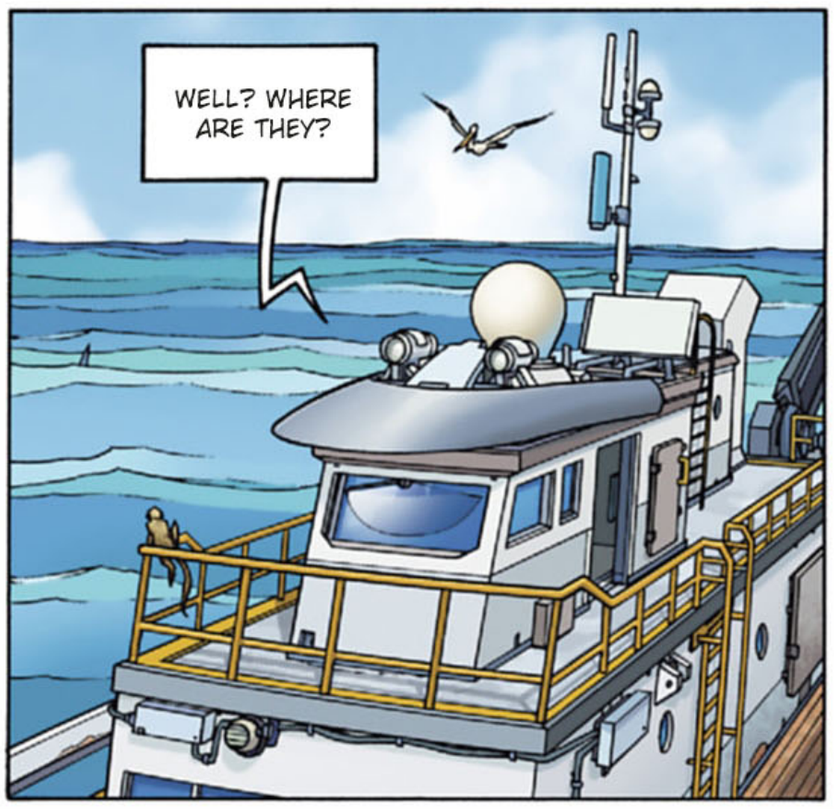
WE'LL BE IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH YOU THROUGH THE DRONE'S CAMERA. THIS WAY YOU CAN CONTACT US IN CASE OF ANY TROUBLE.

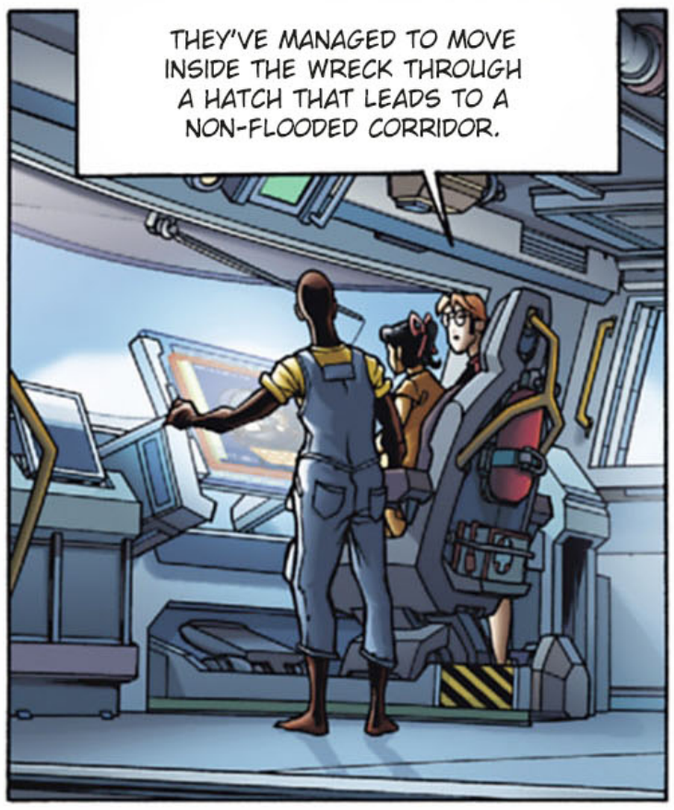
OK!

THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN DOCK AT THE LOWER PART OF THE WRECK, THE SPOT IS ALREADY TAKEN BY AN UNDERWATER ELEVATOR. PROBABLY THE ONE JANE MOORE AND HER ACCOMPLICES USED TO COME DOWN HERE.

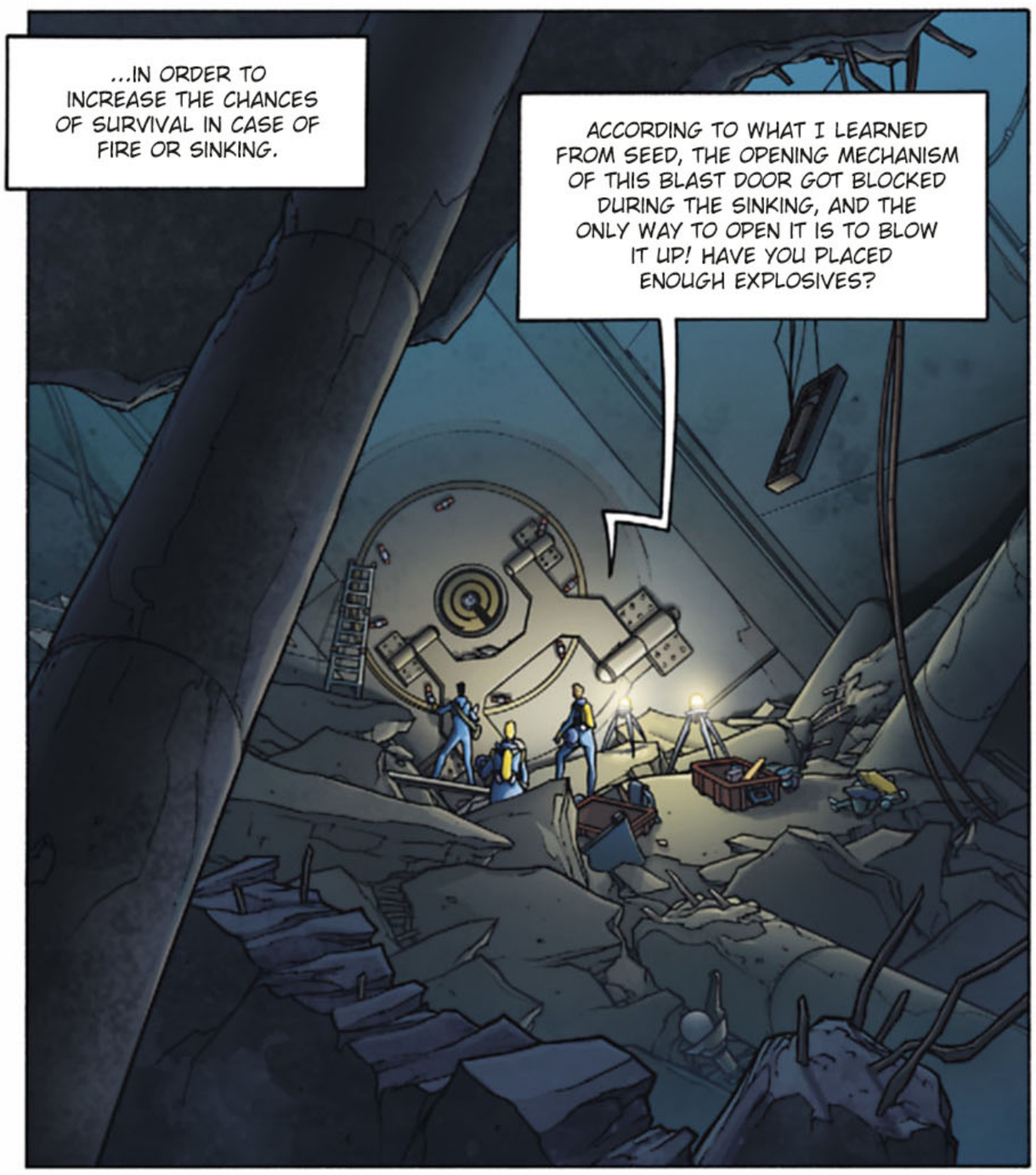
WE'LL TRY TO ENTER THROUGH THE DESTROYED AREA. I KNOW THAT A TEAM OF RESCUERS PASSED THROUGH IT FIVE YEARS AGO TO HELP THE SURVIVORS.




WELL? WHERE ARE THEY?


THEY'VE MANAGED TO MOVE INSIDE THE WRECK THROUGH A HATCH THAT LEADS TO A NON-FLOODED CORRIDOR.

WHY ISN'T IT FLOODED?
BECAUSE THE ARCHITECT WHO CONSTRUCTED GOLDEN CITY DIVIDED EACH FLOOR OF THE CITY INTO SEVERAL AUTONOMOUS WATERTIGHT COMPARTMENTS...


...IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE CHANCES OF SURVIVAL IN CASE OF FIRE OR SINKING.
ACCORDING TO WHAT I LEARNED FROM SEED, THE OPENING MECHANISM OF THIS BLAST DOOR GOT BLOCKED DURING THE SINKING, AND THE ONLY WAY TO OPEN IT IS TO BLOW IT UP! HAVE YOU PLACED ENOUGH EXPLOSIVES?

YES! THERE'S ENOUGH HERE TO BLOW UP THE ENTIRE BANK! WE WON'T EVEN HAVE TO USE THE DYNAMITE STICK WE BROUGHT WITH US.
PERFECT! WHERE'S THE DETONATOR'S REMOTE CONTROL?
IN THE BOX. I'LL GO GET IT.

BEHIND THIS DOOR WE WILL FIND THE GOLD RESERVES OF THE CENTRAL BANK OF GOLDEN CITY! IT'S FILLED WITH GOLD BARS! IN JUST A FEW MINUTES, WE'LL BE RICH!
38

OR YOU'LL BE DEAD!

?!

FIVE YEARS AGO, RESCUERS DECIDED NOT TO BLOW UP THIS BLAST DOOR AND RECOVER THE GOLD, BECAUSE THEY WOULD'VE HAD TO USE AN EXPLOSIVE CHARGE THAT COULD DESTABILIZE THE ALREADY SHAKY STRUCTURE OF THE WRECK AND PUSH IT INTO THE ABYSS.

WHO ARE YOU?

MY NAME IS HARRISON BANKS. I CAME DOWN HERE TO GET YOU, MISS MOORE.

ME?! WHY?

BECAUSE SEED IS DEAD AND NOW YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON WHO KNOWS HOW TO USE THE SOFTWARE SHE CREATED AND WHICH WILL ALLOW THIS GIRL TO RECOVER HER MEMORY.

WHO TOLD YOU THAT I WAS HERE?

YOUR ROOMMATE.

DIVING DOWN TO THIS WRECK COSTS MONEY! WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST WAIT FOR JANE TO COME HOME?

BECAUSE I'M CONVINCED THAT SHE WON'T RETURN AND THAT ALL THREE OF YOU ARE PLANNING TO HIDE IN A TAX HAVEN TO PUT YOUR GOLD AWAY!

EXACTLY! SPEAKING OF GOLD, I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE ITS COLOR! SO STEP BACK, I'LL TRIGGER THE EXPLOSION!

NO! WAIT! DON'T DO IT! REMEMBER WHAT HARRISON TOLD YOU ABOUT THE RESCUERS!

I DON'T BELIEVE HIM! THIS IS JUST A BUNCH OF BULL! THERE'S NO DANGER! I'M SURE YOUR FRIEND BANKS IS ALSO HERE FOR THE GOLD AND HE ACTUALLY ORGANIZED THIS LITTLE DIVE TO GET HIS HANDS ON IT! AND NOT, AS HE CLAIMS, TO GET YOUR MEMORY BACK!

SO HE'LL TRY EVERYTHING TO STOP US FROM OPENING THIS DAMN SAFE! BUT IF HE THINKS HE CAN SCARE US WITH THIS, HE'S WRONG! RUN FOR COVER, IT'S GOING TO BLOW!

39

ARH!

HE... HE'S DEAD!

WHERE'D THAT SHOT COME FROM?

I DON'T KNOW.

OVER THERE! THERE'S SOMEONE WITH A GUN!

DON'T STAND AROUND! GET DOWN!

WHERE DID THAT GUY COME FROM? WHY IS HE SHOOTING AT US?

I DON'T KNOW, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BE A SITTING DUCK!

ARH...

40

STOP... DON'T... DON'T SHOOT... PLEASE...

FINE, BUT UNDER ONE CONDITION: YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO TOUCH THE DETONATOR'S REMOTE CONTROL. IF ONE OF YOU TRIES TO GET CLOSE, I'LL SHOOT! UNDERSTOOD?

STAY WHERE YOU ARE AND RAISE YOUR HANDS!

B... BASINGER?!

BANKS! IT'S SO DARK DOWN HERE I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

AND YOU?

I'M INVESTIGATING THE SINKING OF GOLDEN CITY. MY WIFE AND MY KIDS PERISHED IN THE DISASTER. SO, FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR THE BASTARDS WHO SUNK THE CITY WITH A WIRE-GUIDED TORPEDO.

I'M STILL MISSING A CLUE TO CLOSE MY INVESTIGATION. WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT THIS CLUE IS HIDDEN IN THIS WRECK, I ASKED A PROFESSIONAL DIVER TO BRING ME HERE LAST WEEK FOR A LARGE SUM OF MONEY.

BUT THAT BASTARD TOOK THE CHANCE WHEN I WAS INSIDE THE WRECK TO RETURN TO THE SURFACE WITH HIS SUBMARINE AND GAVE ME THE SLIP. I DON'T KNOW WHY!

I'VE BEEN A PRISONER OF THIS SUBMERGED CITY FOR DAYS! I'M DYING OF HUNGER AND THIRST! I WAS EXPLORING THE TOP FLOOR FOR SOME FOOD AND WATER WHEN I HEARD VOICES AND SHOUTING IN THE DISTANCE. SO I WENT TO LOOK WHERE THEY WERE COMING FROM AND THAT'S HOW I FOUND YOU.

WHO'S THIS GUY?

COMMANDER BASINGER. HE USED TO RUN THE GOLDEN CITY POLICE.

NOW THAT I'VE DISCOVERED THE CLUE I WAS LOOKING FOR, I CAN FINALLY AVENGE MY FAMILY. SO WHEN I SAW THAT ONE OF YOU WAS GETTING READY TO BLOW UP THE BLAST DOOR, DESPITE THE OBVIOUS RISKS, I WANTED TO STOP HIM. THAT'S WHY I PULLED THE TRIGGER. I WAS JUST TRYING TO HURT HIM, BUT I WAS TOO FAR AWAY AND BOTHERED BY DARKNESS...

41

WHEN THE OTHER GUY THREW THAT STICK OF DYNAMITE AT ME, I RETURNED FIRE, WITHOUT THINKING, TO DEFEND MYSELF.

WHERE DID YOU FIND THIS GUN?

IN A CORRIDOR. IT WAS LYING ON THE FLOOR, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS DOING THERE. I NEVER SHOULD'VE PICKED IT UP. WHENEVER WE GET OUR HANDS ON IT, WE USUALLY END UP USING IT SOONER OR LATER.

YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S LIKE THIS REMOTE CONTROL: WHEN YOU HOLD IT IN YOUR HAND, YOU REALLY WANNA USE IT!

TELL HIM NOT TO DO THAT, AMBER. SEE IF YOU CAN CONVINCE HIM, OR WE'LL ALL GOING TO DIE. AND YOUR SON NEEDS A MOTHER. THINK ABOUT HIM.

I AM, HARRISON, THAT'S THE ONLY THING I CAN THINK ABOUT! WITH ALL THE MONEY THAT'S LOCKED INSIDE, I CAN TAKE HIM TO LIVE IN NICE NEIGHBORHOODS AND FINALLY OFFER HIM A DECENT LIFE! YOU THINK I ENJOY THIS, BEING A HIRED KILLER TO FEED HIM AND PAY FOR HIS STUDIES?

YOU WERE BORN WITH A SILVER SPOON IN YOUR MOUTH, BANKS, YOU ALWAYS HAD EVERYTHING. I DIDN'T. NEITHER DID AMBER. WE KNOW WHEN MONEY'S TIGHT. YOU COULD SAY WE'RE MONTHLY SUBSCRIBERS. SO DON'T EXPECT US TO LET THIS GOLD ROT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN!

MAYBE YOU WANT TO DIE HERE, BUT I DON'T! I WANT TO LIVE AND RECOVER MY MEMORY TO FINALLY FIND OUT WHO I AM! GIVE US TIME TO RETURN TO OUR SUBMARINE BEFORE YOU TRIGGER THE EXPLOSION, OTHERWISE...

DON'T PLAY WITH THAT, LITTLE GIRL. THESE THINGS GO OFF ON THEIR OWN! FINE, GET OUT! AMBER AND I WILL GO BACK TO THE SURFACE BY TAKING THE UNDERWATER ELEVATOR THAT JANE MOORE AND HER FRIENDS USED TO COME DOWN HERE.

IN THAT CASE, I'M STAYING HERE! I WANT MY SHARE OF THE GOLD, TOO!

NOT GOING TO HAPPEN! YOU'RE COMING WITH US! YOU'LL BE RELEASED ONCE YOU REPROGRAM MY MEMORY!

WHERE'S SEED'S SOFTWARE? AND HER LAPTOP?

IN HARRISON'S CABIN.

GO GET THEM. JANE MOORE'S GOING TO NEED THEM.

SEED WAS USUALLY VERY PRIVATE ABOUT HER INVENTIONS. SHE DIDN'T SPEAK TO ANYONE BECAUSE SHE LIVED IN OBSESSIVE FEAR THAT SOMEONE WOULD STEAL HER IDEAS. I'M SURPRISED THAT SHE SHOWED YOU HOW TO USE HER SOFTWARE! THAT'S NOT LIKE HER!

SHE WAS IN LOVE WITH ME. WHEN WE SLEPT TOGETHER, SHE SOMETIMES REVEALED HER SECRETS TO ME. THAT'S HOW SHE TOLD ME ABOUT THAT SOFTWARE.

AND THE GOLD?

YES.

PUT ON YOUR DIVING MASK. THIS IS OUR WAY OUT.

SHIT, IT'S STUCK! I CAN'T OPEN IT!

BUT THIS IS THE GATE WE USED EARLIER.

GIVE ME A HAND, BASINGER. MAYBE WE CAN UNBLOCK IT.

S-31415

43

BANKS AND THE OTHERS SHOULD BE OUT OF THE WRECK BY NOW! C'MON, LET'S HIDE ON THE TOP FLOOR!

WHY?

THE FURTHER AWAY FROM THE SAFE DOOR, THE BETTER! I DON'T WANT TO GET A PIECE OF METAL RIGHT IN THE FACE!

COVER YOUR EARS! EXPLOSION IN TEN SECONDS!

DAMN, WHY DIDN'T IT BLOW UP? THOSE IDIOTS MUST'VE USED THE WRONG WIRE! I'LL GO SEE!

ARH!

YOU THINK THEY'RE ALL DEAD? EVEN MIFA AND HARRISON?

I'M AFRAID SO.

HEY! GET OVER HERE!

LOOK, OVER THERE! I CAN SEE SOMETHING ON THE SURFACE!

IT'S THEM! THEY'RE ALIVE! THEY'RE ALIVE!

PECQUEUR
&
MALFIN
SCHELLE